carrier, from Russia and its refit and modernisation. Negotiations for procurement of Admiral Gorshkov are being held.

Action against Army Officers in Tehelka Tapes

†2862. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that on account of non-completion of investigation by the Tehelka Inquiry Commission, the action against the military officers could not be taken by the Ministry of Defence;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the reasons due to which further action on the basis of the defence department could not be taken?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Necessary administrative/disciplinary action was initiated against six serving officers found culpable by an Army Court of Inquiry which investigated into the fictitious arms deal as highlighted in the Tehelka tapes. Based on the finalisation of administrative action in respect of two officers, the services of one officer have been terminated and the second officer has been awarded 'Censure'. Disciplinary and Administrative actions against the remaining four serving officers are in progress.

Defence co-operation with Israel

2863. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a team led by the Defence Secretary recently visited Israel on a defence purchase mission; and

(b) if so, the details of the arms and equipments sought to be purchased and the agreements for purchase, if any, finalised?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) An official delegation led by Defence Secretary visited Israel to

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

attend the first meeting of the India-Israel Joint Committee on Defence Cooperation, held during September 17-20, 2002. No purchase agreement was signed during the visit.

Increase of Sanitary Staff-Strength in Secunderabad Cantonment Board

2864. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the sanitary staff-strength of Secunderabad Cantonment Board has increased proportionately to meet the heavy demand of 500 civilian colonies;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) There has been no increase in the sanitary staff-strength of Secunderabad Cantonment Board. The additional work load of both sweeping and cleaning of garbage from 250 housing colonies are undertaken by engaging private contractors. The arrangement is working satisfactorily.

Joint Exercises with US and France

2865. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that IAF has entered into an agreement with the US and France to conduct joint exercises in air and ground warfare;

(b) if so, whether this represents a major strategic shift in India's Defence policy; and

(c) if so, the details of this cooperation and their long and short-term objectives?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) As part of international defence cooperation, joint exercises are planned with French and US Air Force.